

# Systemic Challenges and Coping Strategies in Implementing Curriculum and Assessment Policies in Primary Schools

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Primary schools in South Africa continue to face persistent challenges in implementing the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), resulting in uneven curriculum delivery and compromised learner outcomes. **Purpose:** This study examined the systemic obstacles affecting CAPS implementation in the Foundation Phase and explored the coping mechanisms teachers and school leaders employ to navigate these challenges. **Methods:** A qualitative case study was conducted using Rogan and Grayson's Curriculum Implementation Framework. Data were generated from semi-structured interviews with 15 participants (Foundation Phase teachers, principals, and Heads of Departments), complemented by document analysis and classroom observations. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns across data sources. **Results:** Four major themes emerged: resource constraints, linguistic diversity, stakeholder responsibilities, and teacher preparedness. Teachers reported acute shortages of textbooks and reading resources, where learners shared textbooks. Linguistic diversity posed additional challenges, resulting in slower curriculum coverage and comprehension difficulties. Despite these obstacles, participants employed a range of coping strategies, including collaborative planning sessions, improvised teaching materials, peer mentoring, and multilingual scaffolding strategies to support learners. **Conclusions:** The study demonstrates that while teachers employ creative coping mechanisms to mitigate systemic obstacles, these strategies cannot fully compensate for persistent structural challenges. Strengthened resource provision, targeted and context-responsive professional development, and improved alignment among key stakeholders are essential to enhancing CAPS implementation and promoting equitable educational outcomes.

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## INTRODUCTION

More than a decade after the implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), persistent systemic inequities continue to shape teaching and learning in South Africa's urban schools. In 2023, South Africa's basic education system enrolled over 13.4 million learners across 24,836 schools nationally—yet persistent inequalities continue to shape learners' daily experiences, particularly in urban contexts where diversity and density converge. Gauteng, the country's economic hub, serves approximately 2.6

million learners in 2,979 public and independent schools, making it one of the most educationally complex provinces in the nation (Department of Basic Education, 2023). Within this landscape, the Johannesburg North District stands out as a microcosm of these dynamics, encompassing a broad mix of public, independent, primary, and secondary schools that collectively reflect the pressures of urban schooling environments (Department of Basic Education, 2024).

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), implemented in 2012, was intended to create a uniform and equitable framework for curriculum delivery nationwide, addressing deeply entrenched inequalities (Hoadley, 2024; Khumalo, 2025). However, scholars have shown that curriculum reforms seldom succeed without accounting for organisational capacity, resource distribution, and contextual teaching conditions—key pillars in theoretical models of curriculum implementation (Pillay, 2024; Teamann, 2025). These frameworks emphasise that curriculum success hinges on the interplay between structural support, teacher capabilities, and community engagement rather than policy design alone. By foregrounding these theoretical lenses, it becomes clear why uniform implementation remains elusive in districts marked by linguistic diversity, high learner mobility, and resource variability.

Johannesburg North's schooling environment illustrates these dynamics vividly. In contrast, Gauteng hosts the highest concentration of independent schools nationally—918 institutions, more than any other province—its public schools continue to experience high learner–educator ratios and rapid enrolment pressures that strain teaching capacity. These contextual pressures intersect with multilingual classroom realities, inconsistent access to teaching materials, and administrative burdens, collectively undermining the intended outcomes of CAPS (Tibane et al., 2024). Crucially, the post-pandemic period has magnified these systemic stresses, widening pre-existing achievement gaps and intensifying the need for contextually responsive instructional practices (Department of Basic Education, 2024).

Although substantial scholarship has analysed curriculum implementation in rural settings, the lived experiences of educators in urban, resource-variable districts such as Johannesburg North remain insufficiently explored. Understanding these experiences is essential for deepening national insights into how policy reforms operate in practice and how practitioner-driven adaptations, coping mechanisms, and constraints shape curriculum delivery on the ground.

The purpose of this study is to examine the systemic obstacles and adaptive strategies associated with the implementation of CAPS in primary schools within the Johannesburg North District. Specifically, the study seeks to identify the practical constraints educators, administrators, and learners encounter—such as inadequate infrastructure, shortages of teaching materials, large class sizes, and limited professional development opportunities—and to explore how these stakeholders negotiate and manage these tensions in their daily practice. By situating the analysis within a theoretical framework that emphasises contextualised curriculum implementation, the study aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how urban schooling environments shape the realisation of national curriculum goals.

The primary research questions that this study aims to address are as follows:

- What are the primary obstacles that educators face when implementing CAPS in primary schools in Johannesburg?
- How do educators perceive and confront these challenges?
- What strategies can be implemented to improve the implementation of CAPS in these schools?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In the South African context, curriculum reform and implementation remain deeply intertwined with the country's socio-political history. Therefore, a systematic examination of curriculum changes, implementation challenges, and coping strategies provides the necessary foundation for analysing the realities of CAPS implementation in under-resourced schools.

### *Evolution of Curriculum Reform in South Africa: From OBE to RNCS to CAPS*

Curriculum reform in South Africa has historically reflected the nation's evolving socio-political landscape, particularly efforts to redress apartheid-era inequalities (Heystek & Shula, 2024). The introduction of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) in the mid-1990s marked an ambitious move toward progressive, learner-centred pedagogy. While OBE was celebrated for its philosophical alignment with democratic education, its implementation faltered due to its complexity and the inadequate preparation of teachers (Chuene & Teane, 2024). This resulted in widespread confusion and inconsistent classroom practices.

The Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) attempted to streamline OBE, yet it too struggled to deliver practical clarity. CAPS, introduced in 2012, sought to resolve these challenges by providing a more explicit, prescriptive, grade-by-grade curriculum structure, simplifying the expectations placed on teachers and learners (Dikgale & Chauke, 2024). Despite this progress, CAPS has also drawn criticism, particularly for its centralisation and perceived rigidity, which some argue constrains teachers' ability to adapt content to local learning needs (Nubia & Blignaut, 2023).

## **Systemic Constraints Affecting CAPS Implementation**

### *Teacher Preparedness and Professional Capability*

Teacher readiness consistently emerges as a central determinant of curriculum success. Across multiple studies, educators—especially those in under-resourced schools—report insufficient training and lack of ongoing professional development opportunities, leaving them feeling unprepared to implement CAPS effectively (Solomon et al., 2024; Motitswe, 2025). This gap undermines the curriculum's intended outcomes and places additional strain on teachers already facing high workloads and increasing administrative requirements.

### *Resource Allocation and School Infrastructure*

Resource disparities continue to impede equal curriculum implementation nationwide. Many schools lack essential materials, including textbooks, curriculum documents, teaching aids, and digital technologies (Zeda, 2024; Wagner, 2024). These inequities not only inhibit instructional delivery but also perpetuate the very inequalities CAPS was designed to address. Infrastructural limitations—such as overcrowded classrooms and insufficient teaching spaces—further weaken teachers' ability to deliver lessons as prescribed.

### *Community Engagement and Socio-Economic Barriers*

Parental and community involvement plays a critical role in curriculum implementation, yet in many disadvantaged communities such engagement remains limited. Socio-economic factors such as unemployment, poverty, and crime hinder parental participation, thereby reducing the support structures learners rely on for academic success (Richard, 2024). Schools in such contexts face heightened challenges, as they must compensate for systemic social deficits beyond their control.

### *Teacher Coping Strategies in Under-Resourced Contexts*

Although the literature consistently outlines the barriers to CAPS implementation, research also highlights a range of coping strategies adopted by teachers—an area that requires deeper scholarly attention. Teachers commonly employ curriculum adaptation practices, modifying lesson plans, pacing, and assessment methods to accommodate large classes, multilingual learners, and limited resources. Some develop informal peer-support networks, sharing materials and knowledge to mitigate the absence of formal training. Educators in severely under-resourced environments often display significant instructional creativity, using improvised teaching aids, community-donated materials, and learner-generated resources. Additionally, teachers increasingly draw on collaborative problem-solving, working with school leadership teams to prioritise content, streamline administrative tasks, or negotiate realistic workloads. Despite these efforts, such coping mechanisms

often emerge from necessity rather than institutional support, highlighting the uneven conditions under which teachers must operate.

### ***International Perspectives***

Educational reform remains a global priority as countries strive to modernize their curricula and respond to evolving social and economic needs. However, the success of these reforms often depends not only on the design of new policies but also on the practical realities of implementation.

Kenya's adoption of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) represents a major transformation of its education system. However, despite this progressive shift, the implementation process has encountered several systemic challenges that mirror difficulties observed in other curriculum reforms, such as South Africa's Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (Nyaboke *et al*, 2021; Mwangi, 2025). Deep-rooted structural and resource-based challenges have consistently hindered Nigeria's efforts to reform its Universal Basic Education curriculum. One of the most persistent obstacles is severe classroom overcrowding, insufficient teaching materials, and weak monitoring structures, with many public schools accommodating far more learners than recommended (Odukoya & Tungbowei, 2025). Ghana's School Curriculum Reform Programme shows that curriculum success is heavily dependent on teacher training quality. Despite strong policy design, implementation fails when resource distribution remains unequal (Buabeng & Amo-Darko, 2025). As a result, many Ghanaian teachers often revert to traditional teaching approaches that contradict the goals of the new curriculum. India's National Curriculum Framework initiatives highlight persistent problems with rote learning, limited teacher autonomy, and uneven infrastructure (Sharma, 2025). Teachers often rely on community resources, localised teaching aids, and simplified instruction patterns also visible in South Africa.

Across all four countries, curriculum reforms fail when training, resources, and contextual support are inadequate. Teachers compensate through creativity and adaptation, underscoring the universality of coping strategies among educators working in under-resourced systems. Like these countries, South Africa's CAPS also struggles with inadequate resources, teacher shortages, and overcrowded classrooms, revealing a similar pattern where strong curriculum policy cannot compensate for weak implementation conditions

### ***Theoretical Framework: Rogan and Grayson's Curriculum Implementation Model***

Rogan and Grayson's (2003) Curriculum Implementation Framework provides a useful analytical lens for understanding the persistent gap between policy and practice. Designed for developing-country contexts, the framework emphasises three core constructs—contextual capacity, implementation profile, and support structures—that collectively determine curriculum enactment (Worku, 2025). Applied to CAPS, this model highlights how inadequate teacher training, material shortages, and weak stakeholder engagement systematically limit schools' ability to implement curriculum requirements. The framework thus acts as both a diagnostic and strategic tool: it identifies the structural constraints that constrain implementation and points toward context-sensitive strategies that could enhance teachers' ability to enact the curriculum effectively.

The literature demonstrates a clear pattern in which curriculum reforms in South Africa have evolved toward greater structure and clarity, yet their success continues to be undermined by systemic inequalities, insufficient teacher preparation, resource shortages, and socio-economic constraints (Ngobeni *et al.*, 2023). While studies have documented these obstacles extensively, there remains a notable gap in research on how teachers in under-resourced urban contexts actively cope with these constraints and adapt CAPS to meet their learners' needs. Existing literature provides limited insight into the everyday strategies teachers employ within challenging environments—an oversight that restricts policymakers' ability to design feasible, context-responsive interventions. By integrating Rogan and Grayson's theoretical model, this study addresses this gap by examining not only the obstacles to CAPS implementation but also the adaptive practices teachers develop in response to systemic challenges.

## METHODS

### *Research design*

A qualitative case study design was employed in this research study to investigate the social phenomena of CAPS in real-world contexts (Warren & Bell, 2022; Annamalah, 2024). The research aim was to examine the systemic obstacles and coping mechanisms that arose during the implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in primary schools in the Johannesburg North District, with a particular emphasis on the perspectives of the most significant educational stakeholders. An in-depth comprehension of adaptive strategies and systemic barriers in resource-constrained urban schools was facilitated by the case study approach (Tyne et al, 2024).

### *Population and Sampling*

A purposive sampling strategy was employed to quickly and effectively narrow the pool of potential participants (Thomas, 2022), identify those actively involved in implementing the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), and ensure comprehensive representation of educational positions and experiences. The study included six Foundation Phase teachers, who represented classroom-level implementation; two Heads of Department (HODs), who provided perspectives on supervision and support; and two school principals, who shared insights on systemic and administrative challenges. Participants were required to have at least 3 years of experience in implementing CAPS, active involvement in curriculum design, delivery, or supervision, and availability and willingness to participate in interviews. To ensure the district was represented by individuals from diverse socio-economic and linguistic contexts, the final sample of 10 participants was carefully selected from both public and private institutions.

### *Data Collection Tool*

Interviews, document analysis, and observations were incorporated into this investigation to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges associated with implementing the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). To gain a comprehensive comprehension of their personal experiences and professional challenges, semi-structured interviews were conducted with all participants (Lee et al, 2024). The semi-structured format's adaptability allowed for the examination of emergent themes while maintaining consistency across interviews. Classroom observations were conducted to observe the practical implementation of CAPS in lessons, with a focus on adherence to guidelines and contextual adaptations. Ultimately, the document analysis of lesson plans, school resource inventories, and curriculum policies corroborated the findings from interviews, providing supplementary context. To ensure a thorough examination of the dynamics of CAPS implementation, the data capture procedure was conducted within a predetermined timeframe.

The ethical process in the study was as follows:

- Ethics committee approval was obtained from the University of South Africa. University of South Africa Ethics Committee (Date: 11.10.2023, Number: E-359446171/05/AM)
- Informed consent has been obtained from seven (7) Foundation Phase teachers, one (1) Head of Department (HOD), and two (2) Principals as participants in this study.

### *Data Analysis*

Qualitative content analysis was used as a secure approach to examine current information to conceptualise ideas regarding the subject matter (Ellili, 2022). This process entails the classification, categorisation, and translation of information to clarify a unique phenomenon (Michelen et al., 2024; Valle & De Lima Ferreira, 2024). In this context, it is essential to identify patterns in the data and develop theories that clarify the underlying causes. Interviews were documented to guarantee that participants furnished precise information. Throughout the transcription process, audiotapes were repeatedly played. In order to produce comprehensive reports of their discoveries, participants were observed and interviewed.

## RESULTS

The results of this study provide a thorough analysis of the systemic challenges and coping strategies associated with the implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in primary schools in Johannesburg North. The thematic analysis identified four primary themes: stakeholder roles, linguistic diversity, teacher preparedness and professional development, and resource constraints. Participants' lived experiences are reflected in these themes.

**Table 1. Summary of Themes, Sub-Themes, and Data Sources**

Theme	Sub-Themes	Evidence Sources	Research (RQs)	Questions
<i>Resource Constraints</i>	<i>Material shortages; overcrowded classrooms</i>	<i>Interviews, observations, inventories</i>	<i>RQ1, RQ2</i>	
<i>Teacher Preparedness</i>	<i>Insufficient training; administrative overload</i>	<i>Interviews, policy documents, observations</i>	<i>RQ1, RQ2</i>	
<i>Linguistic Diversity</i>	<i>Translation demands; lack of multilingual materials</i>	<i>Interviews, observations, CAPS documents</i>	<i>RQ1</i>	
<i>Stakeholder Roles</i>	<i>Weak district support; low parental involvement</i>	<i>Interviews, attendance registers, school records</i>	<i>RQ1, RQ2</i>	

### *Theme 1: Resource Constraints*

Participants consistently identified resource constraints as a substantial impediment to the successful implementation of CAPS. Numerous schools in Johannesburg North faced significant shortages of essential teaching and learning materials, including textbooks, teaching aids, and suitable infrastructure. A learning environment that was not conducive to effective learning was created by congested classrooms, which exacerbated resource scarcity.

One teacher noted, "Our classrooms are overcrowded, and we don't have enough textbooks or even basic teaching aids. Sometimes, I share a single textbook between four learners" (PYS4). Another participant stated, "The budget we get is minimal. It barely covers operational costs, let alone purchasing new CAPS-aligned materials" (PVS4).

Classroom observations indicated that the number of learners in the classroom frequently exceeded 50–60, and the delivery of lessons was significantly impeded by insufficient workstations and insufficient learning resources, including visual aids or functional boards. Additionally, the findings were corroborated by document analysis, which revealed a shortage of CAPS-mandated materials, including a reported deficit of 200 Mathematics workbooks for Grade 3.

Chuene and Teane (2024) contend that resource disparities in South Africa's schools impede the effective implementation of curriculum policies, thereby limiting the "Capacity to Support Innovation" and constraining the "Zone of Feasible Implementation" (ZFI), as conceptualised by Rogan and Grayson. These findings are consistent with their assertion.

### *Theme 2: Teacher Preparedness and Professional Development*

The inadequacy of professional development opportunities for teachers was a critical theme that emerged. The participants expressed their dissatisfaction with the limited breadth and scope of the training that was provided for the implementation of CAPS. Workshops were perceived as superficial and lacking in practical relevance to the specific challenges that teachers encountered in their classrooms.

One teacher remarked, *"The workshops are rushed, and they only scratch the surface of what we need. They tell us what CAPS says, but they don't show us how to implement it in our classrooms"* (PSQ4).

Another participant noted, *"Teachers are overwhelmed with administrative tasks. They spend so much time on paperwork and assessments that they're left with very little time for actual teaching"* (PSS4).

Teachers were frequently observed doing administrative duties during class time, which detracted from their actual teaching responsibilities, according to observational data. The Department of Basic Education's policy documents were analysed, and it was found that the primary focus was on CAPS compliance. However, there was a paucity of detailed guidance for teachers, particularly in resource-constrained or multilingual contexts.

These results are consistent with the critiques of the insufficient practical training in CAPS seminars by Adu and Zondo (2024) and the emphasis on the negative effects of excessive administrative responsibilities on the quality of instruction and the well-being of teachers by Bellibas et al (2023b). These challenges have a direct impact on the "Profile of Implementation" construct, which in turn impedes the capacity of teachers to progress beyond the fundamental adherence to CAPS guidelines, as per Rogan and Grayson's framework.

### *Theme 3: Linguistic Diversity*

The linguistic diversity of learners in Johannesburg North schools presented a distinctive challenge for teachers, particularly when CAPS guidelines presumed that English or Afrikaans would be the primary language of instruction. Teachers frequently encountered the necessity of translating instructional materials into the native languages of their learners, which resulted in a delay in the delivery of lessons and a reduction in the amount of time available to complete the syllabus.

One teacher shared, *"Many learners don't understand English. I spend a lot of time translating into isiZulu or Setswana so they can follow, but this means I can't complete the syllabus on time"* (PRS3).

Another noted, *"We don't have CAPS materials in multiple languages. Teachers are expected to adapt, but they're not trained for this"* (PWS2).

This resulted in a loss of teaching time, as classroom observations indicated that there was a frequent transition between English and a variety of local languages during instruction. The policy acknowledges South Africa's linguistic diversity; however, it offers inadequate practical guidance for educators who operate in multilingual classrooms, as evidenced by the document analysis of CAPS guidelines.

Melvill (2024) has identified a critical gap in the implementation of CAPS, which is emphasised by these findings. They advocate for the incorporation of multilingual teaching strategies into the curriculum. Curriculum delivery that is responsive to the contextual circumstances of schools, particularly in linguistically diverse contexts, is emphasised by the ZFI framework by Rogan and Grayson.

### *Theme 4: Stakeholder Roles and Collaboration*

District officials, school leadership, and parents were identified as essential stakeholders for the successful implementation of CAPS. Collaboration among these stakeholders was essential. Nevertheless, the measure of support provided by district officials and parents was met with dissatisfaction by the participants.

One teacher remarked, *"District officials come to monitor but don't provide real help. We need hands-on support, not just compliance checks"* (PSS4).

Another stated, *"Parental involvement is very low. Many parents don't attend meetings or check their children's homework"* (PQS1).

Document analysis revealed poor attendance at school meetings and limited parental follow-through on homework and learning tasks. These findings align with Belcher et al (2024), who stress the importance of active parental involvement and district-level support in enhancing curriculum delivery. According to Rogan and Grayson's framework, the "Support from External Agencies" construct highlights the need for coordinated efforts among stakeholders to address the systemic challenges faced by schools in implementing CAPS.

## DISCUSSION

### *Interpretation of Findings in Relation to Existing Literature*

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of CAPS in Johannesburg North remains heavily constrained by systemic barriers, particularly resource shortages, inadequate teacher preparation, linguistic diversity, and limited stakeholder engagement. These results reaffirm prior research that highlights persistent inequalities within South Africa's education system, where material scarcity, administrative overload, and insufficient training hinder effective curriculum delivery (Muhammad & Liu, 2025). The observed disparities between policy intent and classroom reality underscore the enduring challenge of implementing a standardised national curriculum in socio-economically diverse environments.

In alignment with previous studies, the findings reveal that resource-constrained schools continue to struggle with basic instructional requirements such as textbooks, teaching aids, and appropriate classroom infrastructure. This supports claims that resource inequity is one of the primary barriers to curriculum reform in South Africa. Similarly, the difficulty teachers face in navigating multilingual classrooms without adequate support mirrors Bhardwaj et al.'s (2024) argument that linguistic diversity demands context-responsive pedagogies rather than rigid curriculum structures.

However, this study also highlights contradictions within the literature. While national policy assumes uniform teacher capacity, the practical realities observed in Johannesburg North reflect wide disparities in teacher readiness, especially regarding CAPS-aligned pedagogy. Furthermore, although CAPS was intended to reduce ambiguity, teachers reported that its rigidity constrained their ability to adapt lessons, contrasting with literature that positions CAPS as more "user-friendly" than OBE.

### *Theoretical Implications*

Using Rogan and Grayson's (2003) Curriculum Implementation Framework enriched the interpretation of findings by foregrounding the relationship between contextual constraints and feasible curriculum enactment. The framework's emphasis on the Zone of Feasible Implementation (ZFI) clarifies why teachers in this study remained largely at the level of basic compliance rather than advancing toward more sophisticated implementation practices.

The findings suggest that in under-resourced schools, the capacity to innovate—a core construct in the model—is severely limited by shortages of materials, overcrowded classrooms, and insufficient professional development. Moreover, the support from external agencies, such as district offices and parents, was found to be weak or inconsistent, further narrowing the ZFI. The theoretical implication is that curriculum policy must incorporate flexible, context-driven strategies that extend schools' ZFI through enhanced support, resources, and teacher development. This study therefore contributes to theory by demonstrating how systemic inequities restrict the extent to which curriculum implementation frameworks can function effectively in urban South African contexts.

### *Practical Implications*

The practical implications of these findings are substantial. First, the results clearly show that improving CAPS implementation requires targeted investments in infrastructure and resource distribution, particularly for schools serving socio-economically marginalised communities. Without reliable access to core instructional materials, teachers cannot deliver the curriculum as intended.

Second, teacher professional development must shift from compliance-oriented workshops toward continuous, practice-based training that equips teachers to navigate multilingual classrooms, overcrowding, and administrative responsibilities. This aligns with calls for context-sensitive professional learning models that emphasise classroom application rather than policy theory.

Third, the findings highlight the need for strengthening collaborative structures involving district officials, school leaders, parents, and community organisations. Effective curriculum implementation relies on coordinated support, yet this study found only fragmented involvement across stakeholders.

#### *Explanations for Key Findings*

Several factors help explain the identified challenges. The resource shortages and infrastructural deficits reflect broader socio-economic inequities within the district. Schools in disadvantaged communities lack the financial capacity to procure materials required by CAPS, making compliance inherently unequal. The inadequate teacher training stems in part from large-scale, generalised workshops that fail to address the specific challenges of multilingual and overcrowded classrooms. Furthermore, low parental involvement is often rooted in socio-economic pressures such as long working hours, unemployment, or limited educational background, which affect caregivers' ability to support schooling.

The linguistic barriers observed can similarly be attributed to CAPS's implicit assumption of English as the primary medium of instruction, despite South Africa's multilingual reality. Teachers compensate through code-switching and translation, but these adaptations reduce instructional time and increase workload.

## **CONCLUSION**

This research emphasises the critical importance of the insights and lived experiences of schoolteachers in understanding the intricacies and challenges associated with the implementation of curriculum changes in primary schools. Their viewpoints are indispensable for the purpose of identifying practical obstacles and developing more effective strategies for educational reform. By providing practical insights into the opportunities and challenges associated with curriculum implementation, the research contributes to the broader discourse on educational transformation. It underscores the significance of harmonising educational policy with the actual experiences of teachers and learners to guarantee that all learners, irrespective of their socio-economic status, have access to high-quality, inclusive education. Policymakers must prioritise the establishment of environments that facilitate the transition from policy development to classroom implementation. This entails acknowledging and capitalising on the contextual knowledge, creativity, and resilience of educators who operate in under-resourced environments.

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